

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 1 as follows:

Concretely, a reaction mixture prepared by dissolving 550 pmol of 12-((N-(7-nitrobenz-2-oxa-1,3-diazol-4-yl)amino)dodecanoyl)sphingosine, hereinafter referred to as C12-NBD-ceramide [Anal. Biochem., 263, 183-188(1998)], 1.0% (W/V) sodium cholate and a suitable amount of an enzyme (ceramidase) in 20 μ l of 25 mM Tris-hydrochloric acid buffer (pH 7.5) is incubated at 37°C for 30 minutes. The reaction mixture is incubated in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes, thereby stopping the reaction. The resulting reaction mixture is further evaporated to dryness under reduced pressure. The dried solid is dissolved in chloroform/methanol = 2/1 (V/V), and developed by silica gel thin layer chromatography (developing solvent: chloroform/methanol/25% aqueous ammonia = 90/20/0.5 (V/V/V)). Thereafter, the 12-(N-7-nitrobenz-2-oxa-1,3-diazol-4-yl)amino)dodecanoyl acid, hereinafter referred to as C12-NBD-fatty acid, generated by the above-mentioned reaction is quantified by using CS-9300 Chromatoscanner (manufactured by Shimadzu Corporation) at an excitation wavelength of 475 nm and a fluorescent wavelength of 525 nm. One unit (U) of this enzyme (ceramidase) is defined as an amount of the enzyme required for releasing 1 micromol of the C12-NBD-fatty acid, per one minute under the above-mentioned conditions, resulting from hydrolysis of the C12-NBD-ceramide.

Please amend Table 1 on Page 10 as follows:

Table 1

Substrate (Structure)	Degradation Ratio (%)
N-Lauroylsphingosine (C12:0/d18:1)	63
N-Palmitoylsphingosine (C16:0/d18:1)	93
N-Stearoylsphingosine (C18:0/d18:1)	83
N-Palmitoylsphinganine (C16:0/d18:0)	59
N-Stearoylsphinganine (C18:0/d18:0)	40
N-Palmitoylphytosphingosine (C16:0/t18:0)	5
N-Stearoylphytosphingosine (C18:0/t18:0)	2
<u>12-((N-(7-nitrobenz-2-oxa-1,3-diazol-4-yl)amino)dodecanoyl)sphingosine</u> (NBD-N-Dodecanoylsphingosine) (NBD-C12:0/d18:1)	97
<u>6-((N-(7-nitrobenz-2-oxa-1,3-diazole-4-yl)amino)hexanoyl)sphingosine</u> (NBD-N-Hexanoylsphingosine) (NBD-C6:0/d18:1)	2
Galactosylceramide (Galb1-1' Cer)	0
Sulfatide (<u>HSO3-3Galb1-1' Cer</u>) (HSO3-3Galb1-1' Cer)	0
GM1a (Galb1-3GalNAcb1-4 (NeuAca2-3) Galb1-4Glc b1-1' Cer)	0
Sphingomyelin (Choline phosphate Cer)	0